

Message Text

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ORIGIN EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 AGR-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

L-03 STR-04 SAB-01 AID-05 IO-13 COME-00 TRSE-00 IGA-02

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DRAFTED BY EB/OF/FPD:FCMCELDOWNEY:JS

APPROVED BY EB/ORF:SBOSWORTH

ARA/ECP:ABERRY

USDA/FAS:RANDERSON

EB/OF/FPD:PDTAYLOR

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R 141633Z MAY 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

INFO AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EPAP, EAGR, PN

SUBJECT: 1976 MEAT IMPORT PROGRAM/VISIT BY AG MINISTER

PAREDES

REF: PANAMA 3326

1. ON MAY 12, PANAMANIAN AG MINISTER PAREDES MET WITH
STEPHEN BOSWORTH, EB DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR INTER-
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NATIONAL RESOURCES AND FOOD POLICY (IN LIEU OF JULIUS KATZ,

WHO WAS CALLED TO EUROPE UNEXPECTEDLY). PAREDES REQUESTED A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN WHAT HE TERMED PANAMA'S BEEF "QUOTA", CITING PANAMA'S NEED FOR DEVELOPING ITS MEAT INDUSTRY AND CONSEQUENTLY FINDING MARKETS FOR ITS OUTPUT. PAREDES CHARACTERIZED PRESENTLY PROPOSED ALLOCATION AS UNFAIR, BOTH IN RELATION TO OTHER LA PRODUCERS AND IN REFERENCE TO PANAMA'S PAST ALLOTMENTS. HE REITERATED THE VIEW THAT PANAMA DESERVES SPECIAL CONSIDERATION IN THE MEAT PROGRAM IN RECOGNITION OF ITS ROLE IN HOLDING BACK THE SPREAD OF AFTOSA.

2. MR. BOSWORTH REPLIED THAT WHILE HE UNDERSTOOD THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR PANAMA TO ACCEPT AN ALLOTMENT WHICH WAS LOWER THAN IN CERTAIN PAST YEARS, ESPECIALLY BECAUSE PANAMA WAS RELATIVELY MORE DISADVANTAGED THAN OTHER VOLUNTARY RESTRAINT PARTICIPANTS BY THE ALLOCATION FORMULA BEING USED, OUR FLEXIBILITY IN RESPONDING TO PANAMA'S REQUEST WAS LIMITED BY THE REQUIREMENTS OF OUR LA. ALTHOUGH THE USG CANNOT MEET THE PANAMANIAN REQUEST FOR A LARGER INITIAL ALLOCATION, WE WOULD MAKE THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS:

-- A. THE VALUE OF PANAMA'S BEEF EXPORTS TO THE U.S. IN 1976 HAS INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY OVER 1975; AND

-- B. OUR CURRENT FORECAST OF MARKET CONDITIONS FOR 1977 LEADS US TO BELIEVE THAT THERE WILL BE SUBSTANTIALLY GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR PANAMANIAN BEEF EXPORTS NEXT YEAR. MOREOVER, IF THE US DOES NOT HAVE VOLUNTARY RESTRAINTS IN 1977, PANAMA WOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO INCREASE THE BASE USED FOR DETERMINING FUTURE PROGRAM SHARES.

HOWEVER, FOR 1976, TO REVISE ONE PARTICIPANT'S PROGRAM SHARE WOULD CAUSE REQUESTS FOR REVISION OF OTHER PARTICIPANTS' SHARES. HE POINTED OUT THAT IF PANAMA DECIDES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE VOLUNTARY RESTRAINT PROGRAM ITS PROPOSED ALLOCATIONS WILL BE LARGER THAN THE AMOUNT OF IMPORTS WHICH WOULD BE PERMITTED IF QUOTAS WERE IMPOSED, AND PANAMA WOULD THEN HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN ANY SHORTFALL REALLOCATION WHICH MIGHT ARISE.

3. MR. BOSWORTH; NOTED THAT HE HAD RECEIVED INFORMATION THAT A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF US MEAT IMPORTS FROM PANAMA THIS YEAR ACTUALLY ORIGINATED IN AUSTRALIA. HE SAID THE US BUREAU OF CUSTOMS HAD BEEN ASKED TO MAKE A FORMAL DETERMINATION OF THE COUNTRY TO WHICH SUCH MEAT SHOULD BE ATTRIBUTED AND HE ASKED THE GOP ALSO TO

INVESTIGATE THE PRACTICE.

4. IN THE COURSE OF THE DISCUSSION, THE PANAMANIAN ASKED IF THEY WOULD BE PERMITTED TO SHIP STEW MEAT TO THE UNITED STATES OUTSIDE RESTRAINT LEVEL, AND IF IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE FOR THE GOVERNOR OF THE CANAL ZONE TO OPEN ITS RESEARCH FACILITIES FOR EXAMINATION OF SUSPECTED DISEASED ANIMALS TO IMPROVE THE AFTOSA CONTROL PROGRAM, SINCE PANAMA IS PRESENTLY DEPENDENT ON SIMILAR FACILITIES IN BRAZIL. WE AGREED TO EXAMINE BOTH QUESTIONS IN DETAIL AND FORWARD RESPONSES.

5. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS RAISED BY GOP AND REPORTED REFTEL, EMBASSY SHOULD REPLY THAT USG EXPECTS GOP TO PARTICIPATE IN THE VOLUNTARY RESTRAINT PROGRAM. SIGNING AGREEMENT WILL ALSO PERMIT PANAMA THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE IN SUCH SHORTFALL AS MIGHT ARISE. USG UNABLE TO INCREASE AMOUNT ALLOTTED TO PANAMA UNDER PROVISIONS OF PARAGRAPH 4 OF AGREEMENT IN LIGHT OF PRESIDENT'S DECISION TO HOLD MEAT IMPORTS BELOW LEVEL WHICH WOULD TRIGGER QUOTAS UNDER MEAT IMPORT LAW, I.E. 1233 MILLION POUNDS. EMBASSY MIGHT NOTE THAT PARAGRAPH 4 PROVIDES ANY SHORTFALL OR INCREASE COULD BE DIVIDED AMONG ALL PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS IN PROPORTION TO THEIR ORIGINAL PROGRAM SHARES.

6. MEETING WIT; AGRICULTURE SECRETARY BUTZ COVERED ESSENTIALLY SAME GROUND AS STATE DEPARTMENT CONVERSATION. AG SECRETARY BUTZ MADE FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) USG APPRECIATES AND SUPPORTS PANAMANIAN EFFORTS TO ERADICATE HOOF AND MOUTH DISEASE; (B) USG SUPPORTS THE CONCEPT OF REGIONAL MEAT INSPECTION LABORATORY IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CENTRAL AMERICA, AHD (C) WHILE THE USG IS UNABLE TO ACCEDE TO PANAMA'S - REQUEST FOR A CHANGE IN ITS 1976 ALLOTMENT, WE CAN ALL HOPE FOR MORE FAVORABLE MARKET CONDITIONS IN 1977. KISSINGER

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